

学校编码: 10384  
学 号: 0004017

分类号 \_\_\_\_\_ 密级 \_\_\_\_\_  
UDC \_\_\_\_\_

## 学 位 论 文

**“WE” Model for Teaching Chinese EFL Learners Oral English**

中国外语学习者口语教学“WE”模式

吴 建 设

指导教师姓名: 张秀明副教授

厦门大学外文学院

申请学位级别: 硕士

专 业 名 称: 英语语言文学

论文提交日期: 2003 年 4 月

论文答辩日期: 2003 年 6 月

学位授予单位: 厦门大学

学位授予日期: 2003 年 月

答辩委员会主席: \_\_\_\_\_

评 阅 人: \_\_\_\_\_

2003 年 月 日

---

## Contents

<b>Synopsis</b> .....	1
<b>Chapter One Introduction</b> .....	2
<b>Chapter Two Task-based Approach</b> .....	4
2.1. Task Reviewing.....	4
2.1.1 Background.....	4
2.1.2 Task Defining.....	5
2.2 Theory Underlying.....	7
2.2.1 Task-component Model.....	8
2.2.2 Theme-centred Interaction Model.....	8
2.2.3 Social Constructivist Model.....	10
2.2.4 Information-processing Model.....	13
2.3 Task Justifying.....	17
2.4 Task Selecting.....	19
2.4.1 Task Selective effects.....	19
1). Task Dimensions.....	20
2). Task Types.....	21
3). Task-relating Factors.....	23
Task participants.....	23
Task familiarity.....	23
Task planning.....	24
2.4.2 Principles in Task Selecting.....	25
2.5 Task Implementing.....	26
2.5.1 Three Approaches towards TBA.....	26
1). Structure-oriented approach.....	27
2). Communication-oriented approach.....	27
3). Intermediate approach.....	28
2.5.2 Two Task-implementing Models.....	29
1). The Pre-task Phase.....	30
2). The During-task Phase.....	30
3). The Post-task Phase.....	31
<b>Chapter Three “WE” Model in Oral English Teaching</b> .....	32
3.1 Teaching Oral English.....	32
3.1.1 Goals for Teaching Oral English.....	32
3.1.2 Problems with Chinese EFL Learners.....	35
3.2 “WE” Model for Teaching Oral English.....	37
3.2.1 Task-selecting.....	38
1). Why-goals.....	38
2). What-input activities.....	41
Problem One: Authenticity.....	41
Problem Two: Simplicity.....	42
Tasks to be selected.....	43

---

3). When-planning.....	44
3.2.2 Task-setting .....	46
1). Who-participants.....	46
Teachers' role .....	46
Learners' role .....	47
2). Where-classroom environment .....	49
Group work & Seating .....	49
Classroom Organization .....	51
3.2.3 Task-implementing.....	52
1). How.....	52
The rehearsal phase .....	53
The performance phase .....	53
The debriefing phase .....	54
2). Evaluation .....	55
Goals-setting .....	55
Input activities.....	56
Planning.....	56
Settings.....	56
Task implementing .....	56
3.3 Impact of “WE” Model .....	57
3.3.1 Hypothesis.....	57
3.3.2 Methods.....	57
1). Subjects.....	57
2). Materials .....	58
3). Procedure .....	59
3.3.3 Results.....	61
3.3.4 Discussions.....	62
<b>Chapter Four Conclusion .....</b>	<b>65</b>
<b>Bibliography .....</b>	<b>66</b>

---

## Synopsis

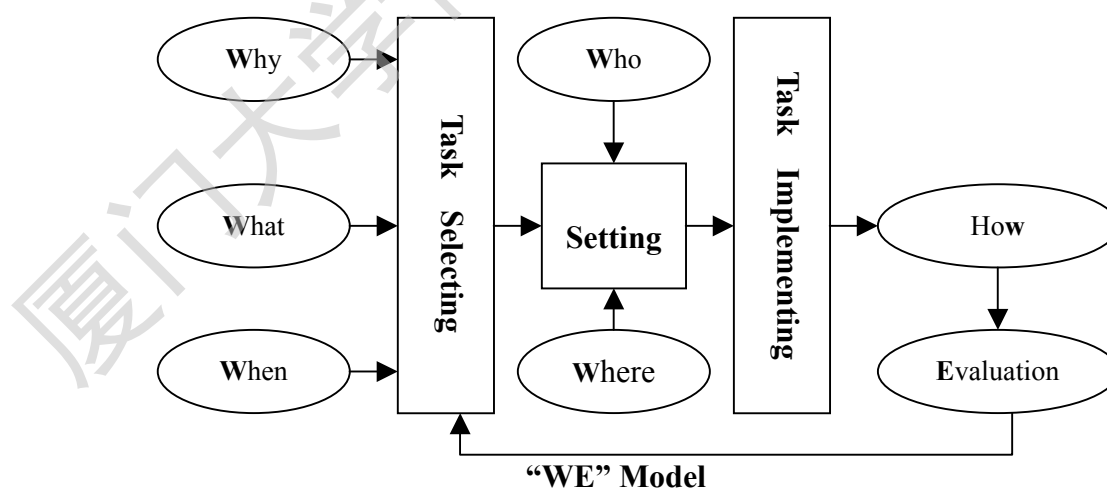
The present thesis attempts to establish a feasible model for teaching Chinese EFL learners oral English, who are reported that the most difficult thing with them is adequacy. Drawing on the researches and findings concerning task-based approach, the present author designs a “WE” model, which formulates a framework for task-selecting and task-implementing in the real pedagogical situation.

The thesis breaks down into four chapters, including the first chapter **Introduction**, which presents an outline of this thesis, and the last chapter **Conclusion**, which summarizes the main focus in the thesis as well as the underlying purpose for writing this thesis.

**Chapter Two** concentrates on task-based approach. Here, a brief introduction of historical evolution and features of task-based approach is given by the author in the hope that they could be incorporated into a systematic framework. And based on those theoretical assumptions and their relative findings, the chapter comes up with two stages for putting task-based approach into pedagogical use, i.e., task-selecting and task-implementing, in which the relevant principles are presented and then discussed.

**Chapter Three** deals with the “WE” Model designed by the present author. Since this thesis is oriented to teach Chinese EFL learners oral English, the objective of oral English teaching and those problems faced by Chinese EFL learners are described in the first section by introducing the relevant findings. And after a detailed introduction of “WE” Model, a quasi-experimental study is given, hoping to throw a light into what will happen in its real pedagogical use.

“WE” Model consists of Why, What, When, Who, Where, hoW and Evaluation, which are categorized under three parts: task-selecting, task-setting and task-implementing.



Teaching oral English has been usually regarded as a headache by most teachers. With various limitations, rather than saying “This is how to do it”, what I am trying to say by designing this model is no more than “Here is a way that seems to work.”.

**Key Words:** Task-based Approach; Teaching Oral English; Chinese EFL Learners; Task; “WE” Model.

---

## Chapter One Introduction

This thesis is concentrating on two aspects in relation to pedagogy. At first, Task-based Approach (hereinafter called TBA) surging recently in pedagogical studies is introduced. Then on this basis, a “WE” Model (see Figure 1 overleaf) is suggested by the present author in the hope of finding an effective way to facilitate Chinese EFL learners’ accuracy, fluency and adequacy in oral English.

The recent history of second language teaching methodology has seen a shift away from the consideration of teaching methods in isolation towards a focus on classroom interaction as the most vital element in the instructed second language learning process. During this period, we have seen the rise of the “task” as a fundamental concept in L2 teaching methodology, materials and course design. Different varieties of interaction occurring in the L2 classroom may have a distinct pedagogical focus. As for the task-based interaction, its main focus, as put by Skehan (1998), is shown as follows:

- *Meaning is primary*
- *Learners are not given other people’s meanings to regurgitate*
- *There is some sort of relationship to comparable real-world activities*
- *Task completion has some priority*
- *The assessment of the task is in terms of outcome*

*(Skehan, 1998)*

However, those who hold different ideas toward TBA also point out the following disadvantages:

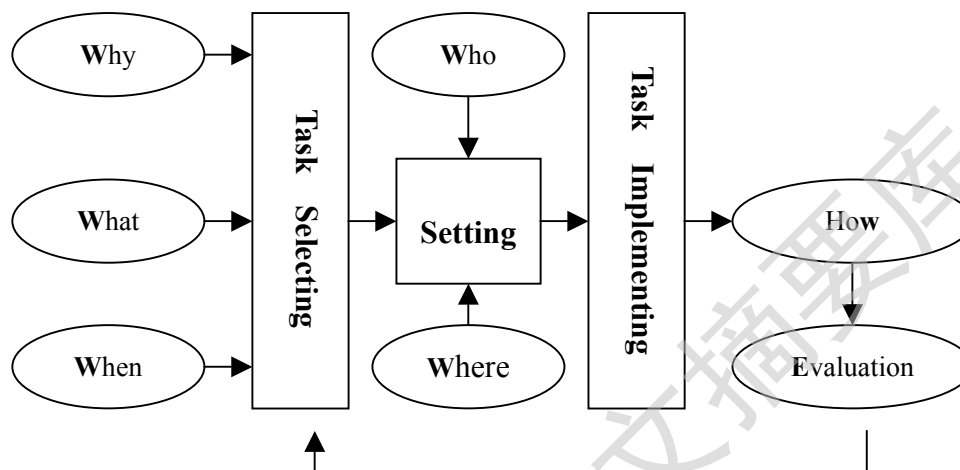
- 1) *The nature of the task pushes one learner to make statements to which the other learner will provide feedback, clarification, repetition requests, or repair initiation. The turn-taking system is thus partly constrained.*
- 2) *There is a tendency to minimize linguistic forms and to produce interaction that is context-bound, inexplicit.*

*(Adapted from Seedhouse, 1999)*

In view of such conflicting positions towards TBA, we probe into TBA in light of task definition, task characteristics and designing & implementing to present the prevailing theories concerned and its relevant justifications, which will lay a sound theoretical framework for the ensuing “WE” Model.

Now we turn to its applicability in oral English teaching. It is argued by a number of linguists (e.g. Penny Ur) that the most natural and effective way for learners to practice talking freely in English is by thinking out some problem or situation together through verbal interchange of ideas; or in simpler terms, to discuss. Here, the word “discussion” here includes rather broadly anything from the simplest question-answer guessing process, through exploration of the situations by role-play, to the most complex political and philosophical debates. The main aim of a discussion in a foreign language course is the efficient fluency practice. To ensure that students could be well motivated and fully participating, task-based activities are introduced to

carry the discussion on, with meaning at the core. By virtue of its different characteristics, we integrate task-based activities into oral English teaching. In order to make a more interactive and effective L2 classroom, the present author designs the following “WE” Model, trying to achieve this purpose.



**Figure 1: “WE” Model**

We expect the “WE” Model can do a little help to facilitate the learners’ fluency, accuracy and adequacy in an effective way. In the following two chapters, the two related issues, Task-based Approach and teaching Chinese EFL learners oral English, will be dealt with respectively.

---

## Chapter Two Task-based Approach

In this chapter, we shall explore the task-based approach in terms of its definition, underlying theories, task justifications and its selecting & implementing. The first section investigates into various task definitions so as to find out what “task” is as far as TBA is concerned; the second section deals with a number of theoretical models designed for task-based activities, with the emphasis on the Social Constructivist Model and Information-processing Model; next, the reasons why tasks are employed in teaching are presented; the following two sections, based on those previous research findings, turn to the general guideline of how to select and implement the tasks for pedagogic purpose.

### 2.1. Task Reviewing

#### 2.1.1 Background

Before we begin with TBA, it is necessary for us to cast a look at the light that Communicative Language Teaching (hereinafter called **CLT**) has shed on it. Drawing on the work of British functional linguists (e.g., John Firth, M.A.K. Halliday), American works in socio-linguistics (e.g., Dell Hymes, John Gumperz, and William Labov), as well as works in philosophy (e.g., John Austin and John Searle), coupled with such contributing factors as the criticisms on Situational Language Teaching, changing educational realities in Europe, and the publication of *Notional Syllabuses* (Wilkins, 1976), CLT had been rapidly accepted and widely applied. According to its proponents, it aims to make communicative competence the goal of language teaching and develop procedures for the teaching of the four language macro-skills that acknowledge the interdependence of language and communication. According to this aim, language is more than simply a system of rules, but seen generally as a dynamic resource for the creation of meaning. And as a teacher, we need to distinguish between “learning that” and “knowing how”, i.e., we need to distinguish between knowing various grammatical rules and being able to use the rules both effectively and appropriately when communicating.

With the development of CLT, since the early 1980s, much empirical research into language pedagogy has emerged. Those large-scale experimental research projects (see, for example, Brumfit, 1980; Howatt, 1984; Ellis, 1985; Johnson, 1996) culminated in a series of landmark publications. Following it, three particular themes were to permeate subsequent thought. First, CLT was best considered an approach rather than a method or a package of teaching materials, in which the principles underlying the use of different classroom procedures were of paramount importance. Second, the most fundamental element of the approach was its explicit emphasis on the role of authentic communication within classroom contexts. Third, the measure of effectiveness was no longer simply the ability to use language accurately, but to use language accurately and appropriately in communicative contexts.

The three themes have had a major impact upon the nature of language teaching.

In Littlewood’s introduction to CLT, he suggests the following skills need to be taken

---

into consideration:

- *The learner must attain as high a degree as possible of linguistic competence.*
- *The learner must distinguish between the forms he has mastered as part of his linguistic competence, and the communicative functions which they perform.*
- *The learner must develop skills and strategies for using language to communicate meanings as effectively as possible in concrete situations.*
- *The learner must become aware of the social meaning of language forms.*

*(Littlewood, 1981)*

It is easy to find that pedagogical attention has come to be attached to meaning, function as well as language use.

In 1984, Breen further suggested that since communication is an integrated process rather than a set of discrete learning outcomes, it should not be reduced to lists of structural, functional or notional items for teaching purpose. His alternative is:

*Here the designer would give priority to the changing process of learning and the potential of the classroom---to the psychological and social resources applied to a new language by learners in the classroom context....a greater concern with capacity for communication rather than repertoire of communication, with the activity of learning a language viewed as important as the language itself, and with a focus upon means rather than predetermined objectives, all indicate priority of process over content.*

*(Breen, 1984)*

What Breen suggests is, with communication at the core, teaching design shall take learning as a whole process and must take account of both the ends and the means. This idea receives a strong support from Nunan, who, standing on the shoulders of such explorers as Candlin, Shavelson and Stern, starts to integrate the concept of task systematically into curriculum designing and puts forward his Task-component Model (see 2.2.2 for further information) in his book entitled *Designing Tasks for the Communicative Classroom* (Nunan, 1989).

Since then, growing importance has been paid to the use of tasks within language pedagogy, and a lot of researches (Carroll 1993, Bachman & Palmer 1996, Willis 1996, Ur 1996, Williams & Burden 1997, Skehan 1998, Bygate et al 2001) have been done on four language skills, listening, speaking, reading and writing, in an attempt to open a new path for a well-motivated, fully-participated and richly-harvested classroom.

### **2.1.2 Task Defining**

As soon as we turn to the concepts of “task”, the first thing we need to do is decide just what we mean by the term itself in language learning and teaching.

A review of literature may supply us a variety of definitions. They are listed as follows in chronological order:



---

1). *A task is a piece of work undertaken for oneself or for others, freely or for some reward. Thus examples of tasks include painting a fence, dressing a child... In other words, by "task" is meant the hundred and one things people do in everyday life, at work, at play, and in between.*

*(Long, 1985)*

2). *A piece of work or an activity, usually with a specified objective, undertaken as part of an educational course, at work, or used to elicit data for research.*

*(Crookes, 1986)*

3). *An activity which required learners to arrive at an outcome from given information through some process of thought and which allowed teachers to control and regulate that process was regarded as a "task".*

*(Prabhu, 1987)*

4). *Any structured language learning endeavor which has a particular objective, appropriate content, a specified working procedure, and a range of outcomes for those who undertake the task. "Task" is therefore assumed to refer to a range of work-plans which have the overall purpose of facilitating language learning from the simple and brief exercise type, to more complex and lengthy activities such as group problem-solving or simulations and decision-making.*

*(Breen, 1987)*

5). *A piece of classroom work which involves learners in comprehending, manipulation, producing or interacting in the target language while their attention is principally focused on meaning rather than form.*

*(Nunan, 1989)*

6). *A task is any activity in which a person engages, given an appropriate setting, in order to achieve a specifiable class of objectives.*

*(Carroll, 1993)*

7). *An activity that involves individuals in using language for the purpose of achieving a particular goal or objective in a particular situation.*

*(Bachman and Palmer, 1996)*

8). *Tasks are always activities where the target language is used by the learner for a communicative purpose in order to achieve an outcome.*

*(Willis, 1996)*

9). *A task is essentially goal-oriented: it requires the group, or pair, to achieve an objective that is usually expressed by an observable result, such as brief notes or lists, a rearrangement of jumbled items, a drawing, a spoken summary. This result should be attainable by interaction between participants.*

*(Ur, 1996)*

10). *A task is any activity that learners engage in to further the process of learning a language.*

---

(Williams and Burden, 1997)

11). A task is an activity in which 1) meaning is primary, 2) learners are not given other people's meanings to regurgitate, 3) there is some sort of relationship to comparable real-world activities, 4) task completion has priority, and 5) the assessment of the task is in terms of outcome.

(Skehan, 1998)

In addition to these definitions, Bygate et al (2001) come up with 6 types of detailed definitions from pedagogic and research viewpoints. From the above-listed varied definitions, we can detect at least three basic features of one task: 1) to attain an objective [see 2), 3), 4), 6), 7), 8), 9), 11)]; 2) meaning is emphasized [see 5), 11)]; 3) communication-oriented and requiring language to be used [see 3), 4), 5), 6), 7), 8), 9), 10)].

To sum up, task could be defined basically as follows:

*A task is an activity that requires learners to use language, with emphasis on meaning, to attain an objective.*

(By the author)

Unless specified otherwise, the "task" referred to hereinafter shall be used in this sense.

## **2.2 Theory Underlying**

Since "task" has taken on a particular meaning in language learning and teaching, increasing concern has been focused on what has become known as a "task-based" approach to foreign and second language teaching. There is now a considerable volume of literature on this (Nunan 1989, Candlin and Murphy 1987, Crookes and Gass 1993, Legutke and Thomas 1991, Williams and Burden 1997, Skehan 1998), as well as task-based syllabi (Prabhu 1987, White 1988, Long and Crookes 1993, Nunan 1993). In addition, tasks have increasingly been used as units for research into second language acquisition (Crookes and Gass 1993, Pica et al. 1993, Skehan and Foster 1997, Bygate 2001). Gradually the task has become a central pedagogical tool for the language teacher as well as a basic unit for language syllabus design and research.

The main driving force behind the current surge of interest in tasks within the foreign language classroom has been psycholinguistic. Information-processing theory, constructivism, cognitive map, locus of control, as well as attribution theory have respectively played an important role in illustrating the learning process in TBA. Other studies of second language acquisition and theories about language learning such as inter-language theory, motivation theory also help to lend a great support to provide scaffolding for TBA. Their contributions will be further elaborated in this section.

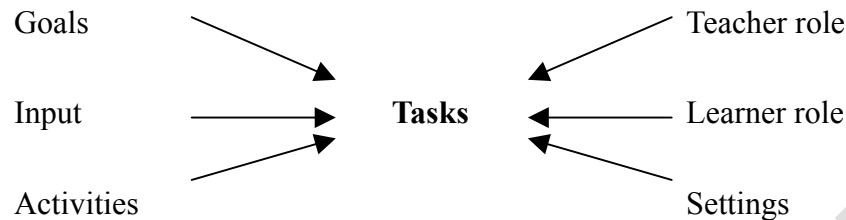
Another important impetus for this boom in using tasks comes from socio-linguistics. Among them, two approaches are worth noticing: Humanistic approach and Interactionism. They have come to impose a great impact on group-work, teachers' role and the social context in which learning takes place.

With this outline in mind, now, some significant models regarding TBA are to be introduced so as to reveal the theoretical framework underlying TBA.

---

### 2.2.1 Task-component Model

In his book called *Designing Tasks for the Communicative Classroom*, Nunan bases his syllabus design on his analysis on task component. It is shown in Figure 2.



**Figure 2: Task-component Model (Nunan, 1989)**

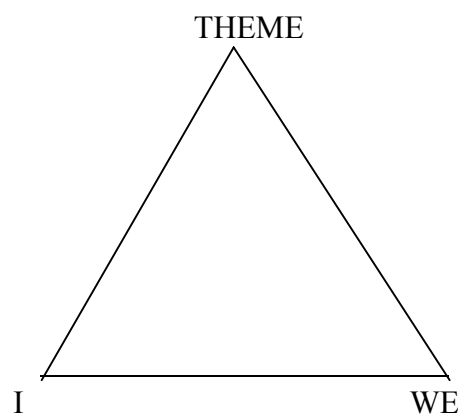
This model sees tasks as consisting of six components. **Goals** are the vague general intentions behind any given learning task. **Input** refers to the data that form the point of departure for the task. **Activities** specify what learners will actually do with the input which forms the point of departure for the learning task. **Role** refers to the part that learners and teachers are expected to play in carrying out learning tasks as well as the social and interpersonal relationships between the participants. **Settings** refer to the classroom arrangements specified or implied in the task. These elements necessarily affect one another in a dynamic and interactive way.

The significance of this model lies in that it has developed a system for describing learning tasks which can accommodate a wide range of teaching and learning behavior. However, it is so obvious that this model lacks a sound theoretical foundation. It only draws on others' proposal on the breakdown of task components. Among them are Shavelson and Stern (1981), who suggest that task design should take into consideration six elements: content, materials, activities, goals, students, social community; Candlin (1987), who suggests that tasks should contain input, roles, settings, actions, monitoring, outcomes and feedback; and Wright (1987), who suggests that tasks need minimally contain just two elements: input data and initiating question. No doubt, such borrowings from others are too fragile to initiate a new approach in teaching methodology.

Another flaw in Nunan's model is the negligence of the role of timing. A number of researches have indicated that processing time plays a vital part in task implementation (see Skehan 1998, Ellis 2001). In Vella's research into learning task (Vella, 2000), timing has even been elevated as one of the seven steps of task planning. But throughout his book, Nunan finds timing no position in his Model.

### 2.2.2 Theme-centred Interaction Model

This model is provided by Legutke and Thomas (1991), who see tasks primarily as a part of an interactive process. Its rationale lies within a social and an educational framework rather than a purely psycholinguistic one. Their model is shown in Figure 3.



**Figure 3: Theme-centred interaction Model (Legutke and Thomas, 1991)**

This model identifies three major elements of an interactive process: the individual, the group and the theme, which they call *I*, *WE* and *THEME* dimensions of tasks. Such dimensions maintain a “dynamic balance” in what they term “theme-centred interaction”. These three dimensions are in addition subject to the influence of a “global dimension” consisting of institutional and societal pressures.

Under the *I* dimension is included all that the individual learners and the teacher bring to the learning situation. Both are significant as it is teachers who set up learning events in the classroom, but also learners who contribute to setting up these points of encounter and who interpret them in their own ways. For the learner, the *I* dimension encompasses both implicit contributions that learners bring, such as experience, feelings, attitudes and skills, and also what they contribute explicitly through language such as information or perceptions. This same distinction applies to teachers as well. Their implicit attitudes, empathy, self-knowledge, etc. affect their explicit contributions to the learning situation, such as the choice of whether they act as informant and transmitter or coordinator and facilitator.

The *WE* dimension is a particularly interesting addition to the debate. Legutke and Thomas argue that learning takes place within the framework of the group, and any interaction generated by tasks is affected by group processes such as group anxieties, taboos, rejections, power, goals and agendas, and rivalries.

Third dimension, the *THEME*, represents more than a topic or subject. It is seen as “a dynamic element taking shape in an interactional process which mediates learners’ interests... with the interests and preferences of the teacher” (Legutke and Thomas, 1991). It is thus jointly constructed and is related and determined by such aspects as the learners’ world knowledge and culture. And tasks will be jointly interpreted in this way by the participants involved.

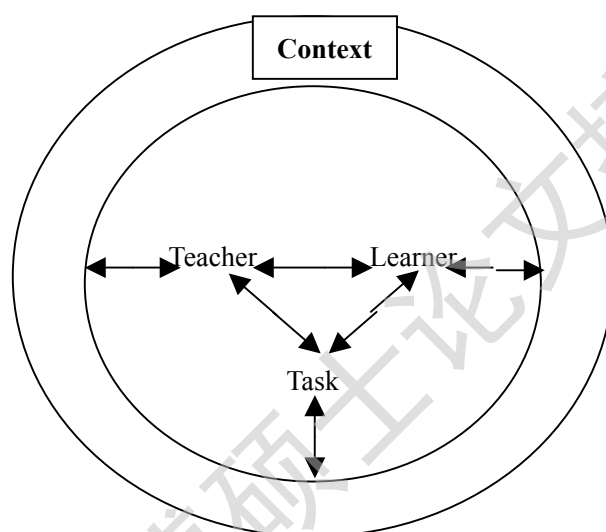
Legutke and Thomas’s model deserves particular mention because of its emphasis on the interactive nature of tasks as well as the dynamic nature of the contributions made by the different dimensions. However, as Candlin points out in his preface to Legutke and Thomas (1991), there has never been a time when language teaching and learning was more in need of a systematic educational underpinning to its activities. Though

---

Legutke and Thomas attempt to theorize the activities from a sociolinguistic perspective by implicitly drawing on interactionism, it is still far from being ranked as a coherent theoretical framework.

### 2.2.3 Social Constructivist Model

In 1997, Williams and Burden presented a social constructivist model to explain the teaching-learning process. In their view, their model constitutes a coherent framework in which different aspects of the teaching/learning process can be better understood and which will help to guide language teachers in their professional practice. This model is shown in Figure 4.



**Figure 4: Social Constructivist Model (Williams and Burden, 1997)**

In this model, four key sets of factors are identified, which influence the learning process, **Teachers, Learners, Tasks and Contexts**. However, none of these factors exists in isolation. They all interact as part of a dynamic, ongoing process.

Teachers select tasks which reflect their beliefs about teaching and learning. Learners interpret tasks in ways that are meaningful and personal to them as individuals. The task is therefore the interface between the teacher and learners. Teachers and learners also interact with each other; the way that teachers behave in classrooms reflects their values and beliefs, and the way in which learners react to teachers will be affected by the individual characteristics of the learners and the feelings that the teacher conveys to them. These three elements: teacher, task and learner will be in this way a dynamic equilibrium.

In addition to this, the context in which the learning takes place will play an important part in shaping what happens within it. This includes the emotional environment, for example, trust and belonging; the physical environment; the whole school ethos; the wider social environment; the political environment and the cultural setting. This can be represented as a set of concentric circles, influencing each other, with the participants, of course, playing an ongoing part in shaping those environments.

Comparing with the above-mentioned two models, Constructivist Model has

---

combined several theories into its framework. It mainly comes from three sources.

The first and most important source derives from cognitive psychology: constructivism, which is closely related to Piaget, Bruner and Kelly. Piaget's notion about "adaptation" tells us "how important it is to take account of the learner as an individual, actively involved in making their own sense of the language input that surrounds them as well as the tasks presented to them, 2) the development of thinking and its relationship to language and experience become a central focus of learning, and 3) care should be taken to match the requirements of any task to the cognitive level of which the learner is capable." (Williams and Burden, 1997) Bruner's ideas are that education should take a broad view of the education of the whole person and besides, the first object of any act of learning is that it should serve us in the future. According to Kelly's "personal-construct theory" (Kelly 1955), learners are actively involved in constructing their own personal different understanding of things. His ideas have been taken up by a small group of educational psychologists, who then establish a personal construct approach to teaching and learning. They believe language is not learned by the mere memorization of discrete items of language, but involves the learners in an active process of making sense of creating their own understanding of the world, of language that surrounds them. And thus, a syllabus or curriculum will inevitably become shaped by them into something personal which reflects their own belief systems, their thoughts and feelings. In addition, we must find ways of reaching a common understanding together with others. Through their ideas, we can perceive the importance of paying attention to what the learner brings to any learning situation as an active meaning-maker and problem-solver.

The second source stems from humanism which emphasizes the importance of the inner world of the learner and places the individual's thoughts, feelings and emotions at the forefront of all human development. Three well-known proponents' ideas need to be presented: Erikson, Maslow and Rogers. Four points are noteworthy in Erikson's theory (1963). Firstly, he provides a "life-span" view of psychology which helps us to recognize learning and developments as lifelong. Secondly, real-life learning involves challenges which often require a particular kind of help from others. Thirdly, it also presents learning as a cumulative process whereby our resolution of one set of life tasks will have a profound influence upon how we deal with subsequent tasks. Fourthly, education is viewed as involving the whole person, the emotions and feelings. Maslow's ideas about human need fulfillment (1968, 1970) help us to recognize that children may be having difficulties with learning in school because their basic needs are not being met at home or in the classroom. They point to the importance of establishing a secure environment where learners feel they belong and where they can build up self-respect by receiving respect from others. Maslow also helps us to see that learners should be encouraged to think (cognitive needs) and not be penalized for being different and creative (aesthetic needs). Classroom tasks should be challenging and encourage curiosity in order to help learners realize their full

---

potential. Rogers (1969) suggests that significant learning will only take place when the subject matter is perceived to be of personal relevance to the learner and when it involves active participation by the learner, i.e. experiential learning. Learning which is self-initiated and which involves feelings as well as cognition is most likely to be lasting and pervasive. From the above, some useful educational implications could be perceived: First, every learning experience should be seen within the context of helping learners to develop a sense of personal identity and relating that to realistic future goals. Second, learners should be helped and encouraged to make choices for themselves in what and how they learn. Third, it is important for teachers to empathize with their learners by getting to know them as individuals and seeking to understand the ways in which they make sense of the world, rather than always seeking to impose their own viewpoints.

The last source looks to social interactionism. For social interactionist, learning occurs through interaction with other people. From the time we are born we interact with others in our day-to-day lives, and through these interactions we make our own sense of the world. Here Vygotsky and Feuerstein's contribution will be introduced. Central to the psychology of both Vygotsky and Feuerstein is the concept of mediation, which refers to the part played by other significant people in the learners' lives, who enhance their learning by selecting and shaping the learning experiences presented to them. According to this theory, the secret of effective learning lies in the nature of the social interaction between two or more people with different levels of skill and knowledge. The role of the one with most knowledge, usually a parent or teacher, but often a peer, is to find ways of helping the other to learn. Particularly, this involves helping learners to move into and through the next layer of knowledge or understanding. This important person in the child's learning is known as a mediator. As a result, the concept of mediator differs from a more narrow view of the teacher as disseminator of information. First, mediation must be concerned with the fundamental aim of enabling them to become independent thinkers and problem-solvers. Second, the learner is an active participant in the process. Third, there is an emphasis on the learner's reciprocating the intentions of the mediator or teacher. Fourth, learner autonomy involves more than the provision of suitable self-access materials. We can see it emphasizes the dynamic nature of the interplay between teachers, learners and tasks and provides a view of learning as arising from interactions with others. Since learning never takes place in isolation, the importance of the learning environment or context within which the learning takes place is recognized.

Constructivist Model takes task as a central element, which serves as a bridge between teacher and learner and interacts with the context. With a sound theoretical framework underpinning, Constructivist Model has completely integrated task into pedagogical curriculum and provides a platform for applying it to the real classroom. Nonetheless, Constructivist Model has its own limitations. It only regards a task as a whole, failing to take task selective effects into account, which will inevitably make

the teaching results unpredictable and hard to control (see 2.4.1 for further information). In addition, Constructivist Model could only be classified as an approach instead of a methodology. It could hardly be put into practice without further investigations into the detailed procedure.

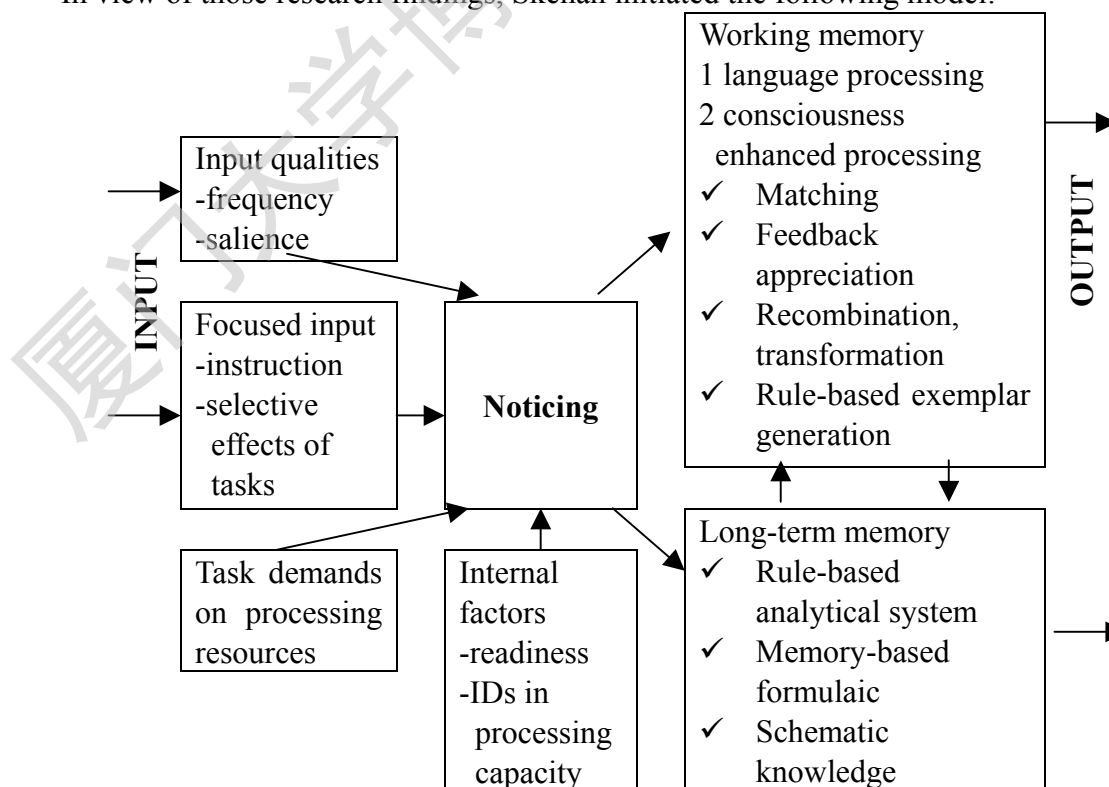
#### 2.2.4 Information-processing Model

Before Skehan proposes in 1998 an Information-processing Model to illustrate his ideas about TBA, various researches are carried out with second language acquisition in the light of information-processing theory.

It is generalized that language use and acquisition are seen as constrained by the operations of a limited capacity information-processing system, which:

- Does not have the resources to process in an exhaustive manner all the second language input which is received (VanPatten 1990; Doughty 1991);
- Is predisposed, at the input stage, to prioritize meaning, with the result that a focus on form has to be engineered in some way (VanPatten 1990; VanPatten and Cadierno 1993);
- Represents (and learns) information in the form of rules or exemplars (Schmidt 1994; Skehan 1992; Carr and Curren 1994);
- Benefits from some degree of awareness (Schmidt 1994; Fotos 1993);
- Can produce language more effectively from lexicalized, exemplar-based representations unless beneficial processing conditions prevail (Ellis 1987; Crookes 1989; Skehan 1992; Foster and Skehan 1996).

In view of those research findings, Skehan initiated the following model:





Degree papers are in the "[Xiamen University Electronic Theses and Dissertations Database](#)". Full texts are available in the following ways:

1. If your library is a CALIS member libraries, please log on <http://etd.calis.edu.cn/> and submit requests online, or consult the interlibrary loan department in your library.
2. For users of non-CALIS member libraries, please mail to [etd@xmu.edu.cn](mailto:etd@xmu.edu.cn) for delivery details.

厦门大学博硕士论文摘要库